

April 28, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Traffic Engineers

FROM: Raymond J. Khoury, P.E.

SUBJECT: Engine Braking and Other Noise Restriction Signs

Over the last few years, there have been several requests for engine braking restriction signs. In response, various signing initiatives have been pursued including a pilot project on Route 17 in Culpeper County. The pilot project was inconclusive in establishing whether the signs had any positive impact on noise reduction and has since been discontinued with the implementation of other truck restriction measures. Past guidance and instructions have not effectively addressed the issues from a highway safety and operations perspective and has created confusion regarding any appropriate application of such signs.

Attached is MMD Memorandum (No. MM-316) addressing Engine Braking and Other Noise Restriction Signs, which is now in effect. We have added "Other Noise Restriction Signs" in order to capture all such signs, both currently permitted and potentially coming.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in implementing this memorandum.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

MEMORANDUM

GENERAL SUBJECT: Traffic Signs		NUMBER: MM-316
SPECIFIC SUBJECT: Engine Braking and Other Noise Restriction Signs		DATE: April 28, 2003
DIRECTED TO: District Administrators		SUPERSEDES:
		SIGNATURE: <i>Raymond J. Khoury, P.E.</i>

Continuing expansion of business and residential development along highway corridors is generating unsolicited requests for signs to counter noise problems. In response, various regulatory and warning (advisory) signs directed at eliminating or limiting certain vehicle operation practices have been installed.

The following has been considered regarding this issue:

- ❑ Properly installed and maintained engine braking and other vehicular equipment does not produce offensive or obnoxious noise levels when used responsibly
- ❑ There are no state statutes restricting the use of engine brakes
- ❑ Effectiveness of these signs at reducing noise levels has not been demonstrated
- ❑ Existing motor vehicle statutes addressing noise emitted by improperly maintained vehicles should be effective if properly enforced. Highway statutes do not address improperly maintained vehicles.

Therefore, since this issue is relative to motor vehicle regulations, and not related to traffic control or safety, the following actions shall be taken:

- ❑ Effective immediately, engine braking and other noise restriction signs are not to be installed or permitted
- ❑ Existing engine braking and other noise restriction regulatory signs shall be removed immediately. This may require rescinding permits and having such signs removed.
- ❑ Existing engine braking and other noise restriction warning signs shall be removed, as time, opportunity and other conditions deem appropriate, but no later than July 1, 2003. This may require rescinding permits and having such signs removed.

If future requests for engine braking or other motor vehicle related noise restriction measures are received, the requestor should be referred to the Department of Motor Vehicles or the applicable police agency to identify measures at their disposal to address the problem.

This issue has been discussed with the State Environmental Engineer, Mr. Earl T. Robb, the Director of Public Relations for the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Director of the Bureau of Administrative and Support Services for the Department of State Police and each agrees with the direction that this document is setting.

cc: Mr. Philip A. Shucet
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